

NEWS RELEASE

Contact Aulani Wilhelm, O'ahu, 587-0330 or 361-0650 (pgr.)
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FUNDING FOR BEACH RESTORATION THE TOPIC OF JANUARY SEMINAR

On Thursday, January 13 at 2:00 p.m., the Department of Land and Natural Resources and UH Sea Grant Extension Program will co-sponsor a seminar on federal funding for beach restoration projects in Hawai'i. Mr. Howard Marlowe, president of the American Coastal Coalition will lead the seminar which will take place at the DLNR Kalanimoku Building, 1151 Punchbowl Street, room 132.

According to Sam Lemmo, DLNR Coastal Lands Program manager, "Coastal erosion and beach loss have reached alarming proportions in Hawai'i. On the island of O'ahu alone, 17 miles, or roughly 25 percent of the island's beaches have been narrowed or lost over the past 70 years. On Maui the loss is nearly 30 percent.

"Beach loss seriously impacts all of us. When beaches erode, shoreline access is lost. Protection from storms and tsunami lessens. Recreation and cultural activities become limited, coastal habitat is impacted and our visitor economy suffers," Lemmo explained.

"The importance of beach protection and restoration cannot be overlooked," continued Lemmo. "In Hawai'i, our quality of life is directly tied to the quality of our beaches.

"We must continue to explore a range of options to protect and restore beaches now and for future generations. Obtaining federal assistance for beach restoration projects is just one of a range of options. We believe that this kind of assistance is justified because beaches are of national importance. The lion's share of commerce and economic activity take place along the nation's shores and it is in the national interest to protect and enhance opportunities for coastal dependent activities," explained Lemmo.

Mr. Marlowe will outline the Federal government's role in beach restoration and will provide information necessary to obtain federal funds for beach restoration in Hawai'i. In 1996, Mr. Marlowe was instrumental in reversing the Administration's policy which had terminated the Federal government's role in shore protection projects. He continues to lobby for more Federal support of beach restoration nationwide.

For more information contact Sam Lemmo at 587-0414.

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